

NEWS

for immediate release



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VALLEY HAS REASON TO CELEBRATE END OF AIR POLLUTION SEASON
NO HIGH AIR POLLUTION ADVISORIES ISSUED DURING WINTER MONTHS

(Phoenix)—Representatives from Maricopa County Environmental Services announced today that the Valley has ended the winter pollution season with no high air pollution advisories for carbon monoxide or particulate matter. This is a great improvement from last year's five advisories and marks the Valley's fifth straight winter season with no violations for carbon monoxide.

"Not only has the county played an active role in reducing carbon monoxide and particulate matter pollution," said Maricopa County Chairman Jan Brewer, "but the business community and the public have done their part in the fight against air pollution through travel reduction methods." The American Lung Association of Arizona and other government agencies are also partners in combating local air pollution.

The primary source of the Valley's winter pollution is motor vehicles. To reduce particulate pollution and carbon monoxide, Valley drivers were asked to reduce their driving, avoid unpaved roads and keep their cars in good running condition. Commuters were also asked to carpool/vanpool, bus, bike, walk or telecommute. Because conditions were so much improved this season, the county didn't have to ask residents to refrain from using wood burning fireplaces.

"Computer modeling from years ago accurately predicted that if anti-pollution measures were successfully implemented, the Valley would be in compliance by the end of 2000 for carbon monoxide. Now we have the real numbers to confirm it," said Al Brown, Director of Maricopa County Environmental Services. "There have been challenges this season, but with our many effective air pollution control measures and favorable weather patterns, we have managed to pull through without having to issue any high air pollution advisories."

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The fact that Maricopa County was able to go without a carbon monoxide violation since January of 1996 means that the Valley is one step closer to reaching Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is developing a plan to show EPA how we will continue our efforts.

The Phoenix area has been aggressive in implementing a number of air quality strategies in order to stay in compliance. Such measures include:

- the high air pollution advisory program;
- Maricopa County's vehicle repair and retrofit program;
- clean burning fireplace ordinances;
- the Trip Reduction Program,
- a smoking vehicle hotline;
- cleaner burning gasoline;
- enhanced vehicle emissions testing programs; and
- the Clean Air Campaign

The long-term trends show that using cleaner burning fuels and engines, including alternative fuel vehicles, has the most impact on keeping our air clean.

Weather conditions, particularly high wind or stagnant air, make particulate matter pollution harder to control. This makes regulation of this pollution more crucial. According to Brown, the vigorous enforcement effort started in May 2000 to control dust has assessed more than \$330,000 in penalties in nearly 100 cases.

Air Quality Information

In May, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) will begin issuing high air pollution advisories for ozone, which is the summertime pollutant. For more information regarding the ozone advisory program contact Valley Metro at (602) 262-RIDE.

For an up to date local air quality report call (602) 420-9458 or visit the Environmental Services Web site at: www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/AIR/airday.asp. Contact "Earth 911," an environmental hotline, at 1-800-CLEAN-UP. To file a complaint about possible air quality rule violations call the Environmental Complaint Line at (602) 506-6616.